

# The New BEACH Act

Great Lakes Beach Conference

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# Introduction

- Welcome
- Fourth EPA-sponsored Beach Conference
- Response to continued concern about quality of nation's recreational waters
- Collaborative State-Federal Partnership

# Links to National Objectives

- Implement national BEACH legislation and programs
- Understand regional perspective, issues, and concerns
- Collaboratively develop EPA's beach program

# BEACH Act

- “Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000”
  - Bi-partisan bill signed into law on October 10, 2000
  - Amended the federal Clean Water Act
- BEACH Act is significant new federal legislation designed to address public concerns
- Act will strengthen federal-state partnerships through grants and technical assistance

# BEACH Act -- Key Provisions

- 3 Primary Provisions:
  - Ensure Nationally-Consistent **Standards** for Recreational Waters
  - Provide Development and Implementation **Grants** to States and Local Governments.
  - Establish **Monitoring and Notification Measures** for Recreational Waters

# BEACH Act -- Key Provisions

- Water Quality Criteria and Standards
  - Existing Criteria & Standards:
    - State must adopt EPA's recommended water quality criteria (or criteria "as protective as EPA criteria") within 3 1/2 years
    - If state fails to adopt, EPA shall propose regulations for revised standards
  - Revised Criteria
    - EPA shall conduct research for new indicators & propose new criteria within five years

# BEACH Act -- Key Provisions

- Grants
  - Authorizes grants to states to develop monitoring and notification programs. Local governments may apply after 1 year, if state do not.
  - Allows “development” & “implementation” grants. Authorizes \$ 30 million per year
- “Performance Criteria”
  - EPA to develop performance criteria within 18 months, in collaboration with State and local governments. States must meet these criteria to receive a grant.

# BEACH Act -- Key Provisions

- Monitoring
  - Act envisions a risk-based approach with flexibility for states to target high use/high risk beaches
  - EPA to develop performance criteria for monitoring beaches by state and local agencies
- Notification
  - EPA to develop performance criteria for public notification at beaches by state and local agencies



# Concluding Remarks

- Conference will provide more detail on the Beach Act and EPA program
  - In different panels during regular Conference
  - Optional EPA workshop on technical performance criteria and guidance (Thursday afternoon)